

Altered Mirror: Ch. 5

by Defiant

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> <meta name="ProgId"> Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Commander Lance didn't like not having options and felt very crippled of the fact that his ship had no propulsion. Engineering had the Impulse Engines back on line and just as quickly they went offline. They needed Warp Drive in order to provide any kind of assistance to the ENTERPRISE. The Centauri ships left like a bat out of hell 30 minutes ago and would intercept the ENTERPRISE in short order, along with 4 unidentified ships.

To make matters worse, the Chief Engineer's initial estimate of restoration of Warp in an hour was overstated, it was now going to be another 2 hours. Lance didn't like what his Chief Engineer told him and out of contempt for his serious error put a reprimand in his service record for not providing a complete and accurate report before collecting all of the facts.

The door to the Ready Room signaled that someone was outside.

"Come" replied Lance

Lieutenant Commander Greene entered the ready room and noticed Lance standing by the viewport staring out in the void of space.

Greene walked slowly to Hawke and took a position behind him. Lance and Hawke attended the Academy together along with Da'nar. She recalled a time when the two of them were quite intimate and at times missed Lance's intimate touch with her. Though she would never admit it to him, nor to anyone else, their intimate relationship ended when they graduated from the Academy and were assigned to separate ships. That seemed a lifetime ago, they both grew up and each have

significant responsibilities.

"Sir, if I may make a suggestion?"

"By all means Erin."

"The JAMES KIRK is dead in the water at the moment. Why not request assistance from BABYLON 5?" —

—  
Lance remained fixed staring out at the view provided to him. Damn, he thought, hadn't considered that. He didn't know why he didn't think of it. As Captain he should have considered all possibilities and avenues.

"Good call Erin, thanks."

Erin smiled, "we're a team."

Lance immediately went to his desk and tapped in the various communication channels and opened one up to BABYLON 5. An image of Lieutenant Corwin came to view on the monitor.

"Lieutenant Corwin, could I speak with Captain Sheridan or Commander Ivanova?"

"Certainly may I request the nature of the communication?" —

—  
"Lieutenant I'm not sure where to begin, it is of dire circumstances I assure you."

Corwin hesitated, "Hold on a minute sir."

The screen reverted to the BABYLON 5, insignia. Lance turned to Greene, she responded with a shrug.

A moment later Sheridan appeared on the monitor, "Commander Lance, what can I do for you?"

Lance noticed Ivanova standing nearby, "Captain, as I mentioned earlier another Federation Starship entered this universe and was enroute here. As you may have noticed two Centauri ships left here 'bout a half hour ago, in a real hurry. Our long range sensors have them on a course to intercept the ENTERPRISE, we also have detected four unidentified ships also on an intercept course for the ENTERPRISE." —

—  
Sheridan nodded acknowledging the information received.

"The JAMES KIRK is in no way of rendering assistance our Warp Core is severely damaged it'll take at least another to re establish itâ€!"

"I see where you're going with this," Sheridan cut in, "you want our assistance."

Lance could hardly suppress a smile at Sheridan's insight.

Ivanova got up from the chair in which she was sitting and walked closer to the monitor. She whispered in Sheridan's ear, Lance couldn't make out what she said. Sheridan only nodded.

"Commander, I can provide four Whitestars. They'll be ready in 10 minutes." Sheridan paused a moment considering his next words. "I'd be more than happy to have you accompany us." Sheridan felt he could trust these newcomers, however having them on his bridge was another thing altogether.

"Thank you Captain, myself and Commander Da'nar will beam over shortly."

Sheridan returned a nod in acknowledgement, and then the screen went dark.

"Are you sure we are doing the right thing?"

Sheridan turned to his left to face Ivanova as he asked his question. Ivanova was a telepath, albeit latent she was still a telepath and knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Commander Lance and his crew only wanted to return home. In the short time she came to know Lance, she was very fond of him. Something that doesn't happen with her too often, cause it almost always seemed to lead to a broken heart, hers. This time was no different, she felt Lance had something for her too, his concern to return home was greater and she wasn't going to be a part of that, nor would she stand in the way. If that would be the case, then she will do everything in her power to help Lance and his crew to return home.

"Yes Johnâ€|they would help us if we were in their universe."

Sheridan turned to a monitor that was constantly monitoring the battered JAMES KIRK. Although the ship wasn't elegant as before, with all the hull scoring, it appeared to be more fierce and a force to reckon with. John felt he was doing the right thing; he just wanted another opinion, more to justify what he would be getting into.

"You take Whitestar 9; I'll take command on Whitestar 7, get on board and prepare for departure, I'll wait for Commander Lance."

"Yes sir," Ivanova turned about and left the room destined for the launch bay.

The bridge of the ENTERPRISE had been quiet; the entire bridge crew were diligently monitoring their respective stations, waiting for the unexpected to happen, as they were trained to. The Tactical Officer had been with the ENTERPRISE for 3 years now and felt reasonably comfortable, especially on the bridge. When the communications channel signaled an incoming message, he jumped. So much for preparedness, he quickly thought.

"Captain, incoming message, it bears a Starfleet authentication code but it is not originating from a Federation Starship," frustrated he

continued to research the data before him. He didn't like providing incomplete to data, especially to Captain Picard, "I'm unable to determine signal source sir."\_\_

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\_Odd, \_Picard thought then stood up attempting to adjust his uniform in the process, as was his old habit, "on screen", he ordered trying to remember he must really stop that nasty habit.

The starlines streaking by at Warp instantly disappeared and was replaced by an image of a young man wearing a familiar Starfleet uniform with the rank of Commander.

"Captain Picard", opened Lance, "I'm Commander Clay Lance."

"Commander," Picard started nodding an acknowledgement, "I must say I am surprised at this communique and your recently inability to contact me earlier."

"I apologize Captain, events here have required my presence elsewhere."

Picard nodded again, "Very well Commander."

"Captain, as you have already determined this signal is not originating from the \_JAMES KIRK."\_\_

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Picard held an intent look, making it known to Commander Lance that is presumption was accurate.

"I'm on board the Earth Alliance Ship \_Whitestar 7, \_we're on a present heading to intercept you. A short while ago two Centauri Warships left this sector on an intercept course for the \_ENTERPRISE. We also have reason to believe four other unidentifiable ships are also enroute to intercept the \_ENTERPRISE. \_\_

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—

"Is it my understanding that you believe these ships may intend to attack the \_ENTERPRISE?" Picard asked. \_\_

—

"Yes sir", replied Hawke displaying assurance in his reply.

"Commander, how can you be so sure?"

"Sir, we've had unpleasant dealings with the Centauri, most recently they were almost successful in destroying the \_JAMES KIRK."\_\_

—  
Picard returned a quizzical look of concern.

"The JAMES KIRK is intact and undergoing repairs as we speak, which is why I am communicating with you on board WHITESTAR 7. With all due respect sir, you don't have a lot of time. I'm sending you all the information concerning the Centauri Warships and how we were able to disable their weapons successfully." —

—  
Commander Riker of the ENTERPRISE stepped forward next to Picard, "Commander Lance, I'm Commander Will Riker, if you say these Centauri almost destroyed the JAMES KIRK, then how is this information you are sending going to help?" —

—  
Lance felt a sharp stab in Riker's tone, "Well Commander, we also faced off with nine Centauri warships at the time. I like to think we did rather well under the circumstances. However if you think the ENTERPRISE is far superior then we won't bother sending you the data." —

—  
Picard laid a hand on his First Officer's shoulder implying that he should stop.

"Commander Lance, it sounds like your crew should be commended. I would very much like to review any data that you have. You said that there were 4 additional ships on an intercept course?"

"Yes sir. The sensors on the JAMES KIRK couldn't identify these four ships; we've never encounter the readings they were putting out. Captain Sheridan believes they are from Earth and may wish to take the ENTERPRISE." —

—  
Picard returned another look as if to ask what they got themselves in the middle of, at the moment, he felt he may not have the luxury of time to ask.

"Captain, you are going to have to reconfigure your sensors. The technology that is used here is far more different than our Warp technology. They utilize 'Jump Gate' technology, which takes them out of Normal Space and manipulates the fabric of the space time continuum it puts them intoâ€|like a subspace tunnel, it's far more difficult to explain, but if you scan for all tachyon particle emissions you should detect echoes or shadows moving in the subspace field. It's the best explanation I can give."

"Sir", Data interrupted as he reconfigured the long range sensors as described by the Commander, "long range sensors now show two unidentified ships on an intercept heading, just as Commander Lance has indicated. Point of origin is that of our present heading to where the JAMES KIRK is located. Sensors also show four additional ships." —

—  
Picard nodded an acknowledgement to Data and returned to look at Commander Lance, "it appears that your friends are indeed attempting to intercept us."

Picard noticed an older man step forward and next to Commander Lance, interrupting Lance before he could return a comment to Picard.

"I'm Captain John Sheridan, commander of BABYLON 5, I can't say I understand what exactly has happened in the last few days here, but from what your Commander Lance has said and demonstrated to me, you have my complete support. We are enroute but I'm afraid the Commander is correct in that we don't believe we will not be able to reach you in time." —

—  
"Thank you, Captain Sheridan. However, the Federation is not likely to start a shooting match, we always try to use diplomatic solutions first."

"I understand," Sheridan glanced over to Lance hoping he wouldn't offend the Commander, "it appeared that Commander Lance wasn't successful in that tactic either and almost lost his ship in trying to use discretion."

"Nevertheless Captain, we will try again." Captain Picard wasn't sure what Commander Lance had done prior to his arrival and he felt confident in his actions, due to the sensitivity of the situation he thought maybe the Commander hadn't pursued every avenue of peace.

Commander Lance felt a punch in the gut with Captain Picard's return comment, he knew what he did with his ship and felt more than sure he pursued every reasonable course of action available to him.

"Captain Picard, I understand your concern to try peaceful solutions, the Centauri will not want to listen to diplomatic solutions unless it is your acceptance to surrender. Earth Alliance may start out talking peace that is until they are reasonably comfortable with the belief that they can take your ship. You have technology that seems so far more advanced than ours and any race would be more than ecstatic to obtain it."

"I really do appreciate your concerns Captain!"

"Sir, four unidentified ships are emitting some type of quantum field."

"Come out of Warp, Red Alert." The Captain ordered. The bridge lights immediately switched to Red as the klaxons went off.

The ENTERPRISE quickly came out of Warp and continued it's course at high impulse. A few moments later four Earth Alliance destroyers emerged from a Jump Gate.

"Sir four unidentified ships have suddenly materialized into Normal

Space." Data interrupted

"On screen," the Captain ordered.

Four images came to view, Picard had never seen such a design in all his career. Data too noticed the unusual design, especially the rotation of the ships midsection. The images were also relayed to WHITESTAR 7, Commander Lance and Captain Sheridan both saw the new threat.

"It appears sir that their ship does not have artificial generators." Data noted as he continued scanning the new ships. "Individually the ships are not a equally matched to the ENTERPRISE" Data added and concluded, "collectively though could be fatal."

The Tactical Officer then added, "Sir, I'm detecting several dozen additional smaller support craft exiting one of the unknown ships. They have light armor and light weaponry."

"Small fighter ships?" Riker questioned.

"That is my assumption sir." The Tactical Officer answered.

"Captain," Data interjected, "we are receiving a hail."

# END CHAPTER 5

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